(b) The tower fell on 9th April 2005 due to heavy cyclonic storm. For removal of the tower material, work has been awarded to contractor and about 40% of the work has already been completed.

(c) No, Sir. Whatsoever minor damage to building has taken place at the time of fall of tower it is limited to the same. No further damage to building or life is expected.

(d) and (e) Do not arise in view of (b) & (c) above.

Upgradation of telecom services in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh

2560. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be plessed to state:

(a) the details of works relating to progress, expansion and upgradation of telecommunications in the urban and rural areas of Andhra Pradesh during the last one year;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact the progress in the rural areas is very slow compared to that of urban areas;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps being taken by government to improve the functioning at a fast rate in this regard in rural areas ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTERY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is the major service provider in the rural areas. The details of the works done by BSNL with regard to the development expansion and gradation of telecommunications in the urban and rural areas of Andhra Pradesh during the last one year are available are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(c) and (d) The population in rural areas is sparsely distributed over a

large geographical area and the demand of phones is lower compared to urban areas, making laying of telecommunication network in rural area more expensive and time consuming. Due to these reasons laying/ expanding network in rural areas become commercialy unviable for service providers. Service Proviers are generally hesitant in setting up/expanding their network in rual areas.

(e) For faster development of telcom network in rural areas, office of the Administrator Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund has entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) for providing telephone on demand in commercially unviable 1,685 Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) out of 2,647 SDCAs in the country. Out of 1685 commercially unviable SDCAs, 117 SDCAs are in Andhra Pradesh.

Statement

Details of the works done with regard to the Development, Expansion and Upgradation of Telecommunications in the Urban and Rural Areas of Andhra Pradesh During the last one Year

I. Development

Sl. No.	Work Item	U/R	Year 2004-05
1.	New Telephone Exchanges opened	Urban	12
		Rural	24
		Total	36
2.	OFC (RKMs) laid		400
3.	VPT provided	Rural	180
4.	Broadband	Urban	37 DSLAMs installed 5,376 Ports capacity added 4,337 connections provided
5.	Cellular Mobile Services (Lines) Capacity added		2.12 lakhs

OFC: Optical Fibre Cable
VPT: Village Public Telephone
DSLAM: Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexer

II. Expansion

Sl. No.	Item	U/R	Year 2004-05
1.	Expansion of Land Line (L/L) Switches	Urban Rural	21,248 20,010

III. Upgradation

Sl. No.	Item	Year 2004-05
1.	SBM to RSU Conversion (Nos)	202
2.	C256 Conversion to AN-RAX (Broads)	838

SBM: Single Base Module
RSU : Remote Subscriber Unit
AN-RAX: Access Node Rural Automatic Exchange

Submission of passport application through district collectors

†2561. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) since when the system to make application through District Collectors of the States for getting passport,was introduced in the country;

(b) the details of persons who submitted their applications for passport to the District Collectors during the years between 2002-03 and 2004-05 under the system year-wise and state-wise; and

(c) the number of persons to whom passports were provided in each of the States during above period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Submission of passport applicaiton through District Passport Cells (DPCs) was introduced in the country in January 2002.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.